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A Farewel

# S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

*693.2.19*  
*2*  
*Church of Richmond,*

I N

S U R R Y;

*April the 27th, 1707.*

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By *T H O M A S W I S E*, B. D. Fellow  
of *Exeter-College* in *O X F O R D*, and Chaplain  
to His Grace the Duke of *O R M O N D*.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for *Hen. Clements*, at the *Half-Moon* in  
*St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1707.

## Advertisement.

**T**HIS poor unpolish'd Sermon ventures to appear, not for it's own sake, but because of it's Author's present Exigence. Who did not think of Composing or Preaching, as it now is, and much less of Printing it, till about Two Days before it was deliver'd. From which Time he resolv'd to draw up his Thoughts on the Text here cited, and in the Conclusion to signifie his Gratitude to his Friends and Acquaintance in, and near RICHMOND. Which being done, and the Discourse having pas'd the Pulpit; 'twas judg'd not improper, for the like Reason, to Hand it yet further to the Press; lest Persons at a Distance, should conclude from his unexpected Removal, that either his Neighbours of the Laity were unkind to him, or he to them. And therefore he thought fit to add, that both these are far from being True; and that he took his Leave abruptly, upon a sudden private Disgust, not proper, he supposes, to be nam'd here; however, at once he declares from his Heart, that he is in perfect Charity with all Men.

A Farewell

# S E R M O N

Preach'd at

## R I C H M O N D.

LUKE VI. 27, 28.

*But I say unto you, which hear, love your Enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.*

**T**ILL we generally see the Effects and Fruits of Christian Love, I hope that the Labourers in God's Vineyard, will not be thought too officious or frequent in sowing the Seeds of it, and in endeavouring to make them fructify in humane Society. Now *Nature* bids one Man love another, and *Reason* bids us love those who love us, and all that are qualified to deserve Love: By Consequence even Heathens may thus far understand, and must accordingly observe what we term the Duty of *Humanity* or *Kindness*.

But, beyond this *natural*, this *reasonable* Office, what is it to love as *Christians* stand obliged? 'Tis to love without hearkening to *Nature*, which bids us love those who love and are like us; 'tis to love without consulting the Judgment of *Reason*, which bids us love those who are *worthy* to be lov'd; and if we would measure, and accordingly ascend to the Perfection of this Duty, let us hearken to the Gospel, and learn what it is from Jesus Christ. There does he inform us, that to *love* agreeably to his Model of Religion, is to effect and love even that which by it self is not *lovely* nor engaging; it is to bear a Sweetness and Tenderness towards those, who at the same time bear Malice and Rancour at us. For, says the Saviour of the World, *Mat. 5. 43. ye have heard that it hath been said, as St. Matthew words it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour and hate thine Enemy. Aristotle and Cicero, nay, and as he meant it, ib. v. 44. the Scribes and*



*Pharisees* do seem to declare at this wild rate; but, as with him *St. Luke* also has it, *I say unto you which hear, love your Enemies do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you:* Which several Expressions of kindness to Enemies, do offer these following Heads of Discourse.

I. In general, that we ought to Love our Enemies,

II. In particular, that our Love of them ought to exert it self in these Offices, *in doing Good to them, in blessing and praying for them.*

I shall first endeavour to explain the true meaning of each of these Points, and shall afterwards exhort you to the Practice of them.

And lastly, I shall address my self to you in regard to my particular Occasion at this time.

I. Now to *love* one's Enemy, is to bear a real good Will towards him, so as not to be inclin'd to do him the least Hurt, but rather to do and wish him all possible Good. Whence it follows, that he, who is endu'd with this Christian Grace, must needs have removed from the bottom of his Heart all the hidden sentiments, *Cor. 5. 8.* of Anger and Revenge, must have discharged and purged himself from all inward Rancour, which is very properly styl'd in Scripture, *H. v. 6. The Leaven of Malice*, because being apt to ferment and spread; it tends of Course, if not timely prevented to infect the whole Lump, to run thro a Man's whole Conduct, and to cast a Soweriness on all his Actions. So long as it lies hid in the Secrets of the Heart, it only waits for a fit occasion of breaking out; and no sooner is this offer'd but all in a Fury, it throws off the Mask, uncovers its malignant Visage, and openly exposes the feign'd Artifice of all its former Pretensions to Love. Especially considering, that while a Man's Breast boiles up with an inward Virulence towards an Enemy, it will be an ease and pleasure for him to vent it; so that then tho he should have no other Motive to incite him, he will hardly be so absolute a Master of his Heart, as to be able to stifle his Disgusts to his own great Uneasiness, he cannot then appear so great a Proficient in the Art of Dissembling; but, that to unburden his swelling Spleen, his Actions will shew and conform to his Resentments, and outwardly betray that fester'd Malignity, which like a Flame, not fully master'd or quench'd at first, could not but increase with its Fuel, and so diffuse it self in doing Mischief throughout a wider space. Wherefore 'tis plain, that whoever would approve himself a true Observer of this Gospel-Commandment of *loving Enemies*, must first cast off all inward hatred of them: For tho the Fear of Disgrace or Punishment may make him seem to love them, by restraining him a while from openly hurting them,

yet



yet if he would shew in the general course of his Life and all times, that he truly loves them, his Affection must rise from his Heart; and then indeed it being real and sincere, will zealously display itself as well in *secret Chambers*, as in the view of Men. Not that it will be or may be expected to be so vehement in its Exercise, or so intense in its Degree towards an Enemy as a Friend, yet in Bowels of Flesh and Blood, it may and must extend so far, as to restrain a Man not only from injuring, but effectually to move him to do all those Offices of Justice and Kindness, which Opportunity puts in his Way, even towards them that hate him. Which brings me,

II. To enlarge upon this first Office and Effect of love to *Enemies*, which consists in *doing Good* to them.

True Christian Love is a generous and diffusive Principle; like the Heart, in which alone it vouchsafes to reside; it imparts a Warmth and Influence to all that it can reach, and it would fain reach the whole Compass of the Universe; that therein it might communicate Benefits and Favours, as well to those who deserve them not, as also to those who do; insomuch, that if the Health, the Estate, the Content, the Preferment, or any other Concern even of an Enemy, be at any time providentially cast into a true Christians Power, the universal Love he bears, incites and spurs him on to do Good for Evil, and to be kind to the Person who hates him; and accordingly so ought we, as long as we pretend to be call'd by that Name, to regulate our practise.

1. Thus, for instance, if our Enemy be languishing and sick, and wistful if it be in our Power to *kill* or *cure* him, we, as Christians, must be heartily concern'd for his Malady, and make it our care to preserve that Life, which once perhaps as heartily tended to ruine ours.

2. If we know that our Enemy is cheated and likely to suffer as to his Worldly Goods and Concernments, we, as Christians, must not stand still and gaze unconcernedly at his approaching Misery; but we must readily step in to his Assistance, must lay open the Fraud and prevent the Misfortune, being as ready to keep him from being undone as to *pity* him if he were. If our Enemy be *naked* and beg at our Door, we, as Christians, are bound to *take him in, and cloath him*; even him, I say, that would *once* have stript us and shut us out of his House, when we ourselves had none. If our Enemy be *in Prison*, we must *visit* and be kind to him, tho at the same time we know, that it was his Unkindness or Injustice to us that cast him there. If our Enemy be *an hunger'd*, we, as Christians, must *give him Meat*; if he be *thirsty*, we must *give him Drink*; we must expend even those very things in doing him Good, for which he envy'd and wish'd us the greatest Hurt, and which, if he conveniently could, he would long since have Spoil'd and Robb'd us of.

3. If

3. If our Enemy be troubled in Mind, or afflicted in Conscience, we, as Christians, must endeavour to relieve him and to turn him from Errors into the right Way; to rectifie his Judgment as to the past, and to advise him better for the future; to confirm and encourage his weak Vertues, to enliven his Zeal, and so to *Save that Soul from Perishing*, which once *laid Traps in our Way* and endeavour'd to bring our Souls unto Hell.

4. To this I add, That in case of our Enemy's Aim at Preferments, as we are bound to do him all possible good Turns, so must we not even Meditate, and much less execute any the least ill Office or Damage towards him, tho never so fair Opportunities were offer'd of Secrecy and Advantage by it: We must not endeavour to blast his interest, nor give him a *Secret Stab*, albeit we were sure, that he could not know the Hand from which it came, and as sure to gain an Estate, or even this World, by doing so. Should our Enemy lye so far at our Mercy, as that even a Word put in might dash or else promote his Business, we must not find in our Hearts privily to undermine his Character, by saying some ill that is false, or by not owning, or at least, not mentioning, or not commending any good that is true of him; for tho our Enemy does neither see nor hear us, yet we know that God does; and therefore must we act as in his awful Presence, and shew our Love to be as uniform and constant, as is the Will of him who Commands it to be such. Far be it from us to make use of such Occasions to obstruct his Lawful Interest, even tho' we thereby advance our own; and much less while we only reap this Cursed Satisfaction, of having done a *Close Revenge*. Far be it from us to Applaud our selves for our Power, Wit, or Knowledge, thus mis-employ'd; to think we are considerable, and that the World ought to Court or Fear us, even because we have the Knack of doing Mischief, easily, safely and successfully, and of shewing how exactly we can imitate the Devil, by hating, even as we are hated.

Alas, these wretched Practises, these Hellish Methods of thirsting as it were for an Enemy's Blood, and rising from his Ruine, are to be abhorred and loathed, as being altogether opposite to that clear, that innocent Spirit, to that undesigning, that open Freedom, which becomes the Professors of Christian Love. On t'other Hand, tho we had never so fair Opportunities of doing Mischief, we stand oblig'd in all such Cases to espouse our Enemy's just cause both in commending, where he is commendable, and excusing him, if possible, even where he is faulty. We must help forward his Interest, by speaking favourably of him, by acknowledging his Worth, by fairly interpreting any doubtful Passages of his Life and Conversation; and this, as I have hinted, must we do, even out of our Enemy's sight.

fight and hearing, and when by Consequence, if we would, we might most safely ruine him. Nay, to Compleat the happy Effects of Christian Love to Enemies, we are bound to exert it in this second Office, *in blessing and praying for them*, in doing not only ourselves, but at once begging God to do Good to those, *who curse and despitefully use us*. This indeed crowns and compleats the foremention'd Instances of Love. By this does the Christian demonstrate, that he is inclin'd to do his Enemy all imaginable Kindness; while after having done whatever he can, he still confesses that he cannot do enough; wherefore he earnestly calls in Heaven to assist his willing Mind, and solicites the Almighty to compleat his Benefactions. So intense is his Love, that he would fain do more than his own private stock will allow of, and finding this to be more scanty than his Wishes, he goes for a supply of what he desires to him, whose Stores are inexhausted; he repairs to him, *whose mercies are infinite*, to call down blessings on the Head of his Enemy, and approaches with Tears to the Throne of Grace, that God may become a Friend to him, who is his *mortal Foe*. This is the Triumph and Glory of Love. And by this may we resemble the best of Men, who have heartily pray'd for their Betrayers and Murderers; nay, by this may we resemble the Son of God, who laid down his Life for his Enemies, and who spent his last Breath in praying for those who took it from him; nay, and by this may we resemble the Fountain of Love and Goodness, God the Father, *who is kind to the Unthankful and to the Evil, who maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust*. Luke. 6. 35. Mat. 5. 45. Thus I have explain'd the Doctrinal Points contained in the Text, namely,

1st, in general, That we ought to love our Enemies;

2dly, That our Love of 'em ought to be exerted in these particular Offices, *In doing Good to them, In blessing and praying for them*, But least, tho we do thus far know the Nature, yet we should mistake the bounds of this Duty, I think fit in this Place, to make a few Remarks to this purpose, before I exhort you to the Practice of it.

On one Hand it is plain from what has been said, that he is defective in this Duty and does not love his enemy enough, who tho he speaks him fair with his Tongue, yet hates him in his Heart; nay, and speaks him fair perhaps only with this treacherous Design, that when he sees his Time he may unsheath a secret Dagger, and unexpectedly stab him; that so by his very Caresses, he may at last kill him, and by his Embraces effectually stifle him. Nor again, as we have seen, does he love his Enemy enough, who, tho he forgives him, and bears no Malice or hatred in his Heart, yet does not proceed to perform real Acts of Kindness towards him; who, for Example, if he sees his Enemy *naked and destitute of daily Food*, bids him *depart in Peace, be warm'd and fill'd*, but at this sad juncture, gives him



*him not the things that are needful for the Body*; which is so far from shewing true Love, that in effect it is only an ill natur'd Insult over his Misery. Nor, lastly, does he love his Enemy enough, who, tho' indeed he does him all the Good that he can by his personal Interest or Power, yet spares to solícite the most high to do more in his behalf, than he himself can; and so to compleat the Issue of his good Will towards him. But now after all, lest in describing one extreme of this Duty, which consists in point of Defect, I should seem indiscreetly to fall into, and teach the other, which consists in point of Excess; I say on the other Hand, that I do not mean that we stand oblig'd so far to love and do good to our Enemies, as to shew that in Effect we hate and hurt our selves; no, our *Charity* in this as well as other Respects, *must begin at home*, and that lawful, that inbred Principle of loving our selves must be look'd on as the Rule and Measure of the Love we bear to other things; so that altho we may indeed forgive our Enemies, as to what is past, may do Good to them, and pray for them, as to the future; yet are we not bound to do this so far, or in such a sense as is inconsistent with our own real Welfare. Our love must be exerted chiefly upon the Supposition of past or present Enmities; but if after all, we find that our Enemy is likely to continue such, and still to carry on a Malignity against us, we may for own Security, be cautious towards him. It is not our Duty to furnish him with Weapons, or Power to destroy us, nor to give *him* Money, who, we are morally assur'd, intends therewith to buy a Sword and kill us; as neither indeed are we bound to use a familiar Converse with *him*, whose main Intent we justly conjecture, is to ensnare us in our Words, and thereby bring us into Danger. Yet may we in some sense love even such an Enemy; we may one way or other still do good to him, and pray that God would bless him, would make him a wiser and a better Man; tho' at the same time we may endeavour to keep him short, and to secure our selves against him; notwithstanding which, it may still appear, that we truly love the *Enemy*, tho' not his *Enmity*, that we love the *Man*, tho' we abhor his Principles, and counterplot his malicious Designs.

Having thus distinguish'd the bounds of this Duty of loving Enemies, to prevent such Mistakes as might have risen about it; I come next to exhort you to the Practice of it, which I shall do by these three Motives,

- I. Because the loving of Enemies is pleasant and profitable.
- II. Because it is highly Ornamental and Perfective of our Nature as we are *Men*.

And

And III. Because, as the Text imports, it is essential to our Profession as we are *Christians*.

I, I say, because the exercise of this Duty of loving Enemies is pleasant and profitable, and that not only as to our present, but also our future Interest in the other World. Now in this Case, and upon Provocations given by an Enemy, the first Advance towards Ease and Pleasure must be Indolence, or a Relaxation and Freedom from Pain. Agreeably to which, the true Love of Enemies besides what is afterwards consequent to it, does first create this Freedom from uneasiness and Pain, and that by removing, as I said, it must of course do, all the hidden, Sentiments of Rancour and Malice; which when kept within and sweltring in the Heart, must needs be very painful and uneasy; for there do they run and fester like a Gangrene, breathing nothing else but Damage and Destruction; they make a Man perpetually careful how to bring about his malicious Designs, and do to rack and harass his Mind, as to take from him his Quiet and Repose. For in this Case, as *Solomon* speaks, *Prov. 4. 16. The Angry and revengeful sleep not, except they have done Mischief; and their Sleep is taken away, except they cause some to fall: But thus in effect do they turn the point of their hatred towards their own Vitals, become real Enemies to their own Persons, and bring upon themselves the greatest Miseries, carrying a Breast always big and swelling, always in a violent state and ready to be burst. Whereas the true Christian, he who heartily pardons and loves his Enemy, and quietly passes by Wrongs and Affronts, enjoys a perpetual Calm, in that by so doing, first, as I said, having purg'd himself from all inward Rancour, and thereby remov'd Uneasiness and Pain, he next falls in with the bent of humane Nature, and so becomes directly easy and delighted; forasmuch as he, like all other Men, having received his rational Soul from the Breath of God, and being fram'd according to the Image of him who is Love, 1. John 4. 8. cannot but still retain in himself some goodly Features resembling God and some little Reliques of his Divine Original: So that there are still in him some Seeds of Ingenuity, some inbred Propensities to an universal Love, a Love as extensive as the whole World, that takes into its Embraces all that come under the Character of Men, whether they be Enemies or Friends. By Consequence, as it must needs be uneasy to contradict this natural Principle, by bearing ill Will to any that are like him, and of the same kind; so to comply with and observe it will be most easy and delightful; and especially when he considers; that this is again expressly enjoy'd by his Lord and Master, what a redoubled Serenity, and Cheerfulness of Soul must needs arise from the Conscience of having done that, which is at once agreeable to his Nature and conformable to his Duty! Surely this is for him to anticipate and begin that Happiness*

piness, which will hereafter be compleated among the *Saints in Light*. Thus in the mean while his Breast is as firm as a Rock, which no Winds can ruffle, no Storms can move, or any way trouble its Peace and Contentment; so false do we find this Maxim of the Devil, *That Revenge is sweet.*

To this I add, That the loving of our Enemies is not only pleasant but also profitable, and that as well for our present as future Interest in the other World. Especially because in the first Place, it secures us from a great deal of Damage, to which the revengeful Man is exposed; who, besides his inward Disquietude, draws upon himself many outward Inconveniencies, particularly in that he exasperates his Enemies, and provokes them to do him yet greater Mischiefs. Being wholly intent upon the satisfaction of his Fury, calling for nothing but Weapons, and running headlong to the Ruine of his Enemy, he often hurries himself into the greatest Miseries. He engages with a Combatant, who perhaps may be too strong for him; and if so, he proves in the Issue at once most unlucky to himself, most sinful and barbarous in the sight of God and Men. Yet so strangely, too often, does this wretched, this unreasonable Humour; besot and blind him, that he forfeits his Goods, his Ease, his Credit, his Life, nay and his very Soul, not minding what Damage he suffers himself, provided that he may be revenged on his Enemy. Whereas on the other Hand, *Prov. 15. 1. A soft Answer turneth away Wrath, a meek and kind Spirit heaps Coals of Fire upon an Enemy's Head.* *Prov. 25. 22. Rom. 12. 20. Coals,* I say, which will either melt him and calm his Anger, will either rebate the edge of his Displeasure and make him be at Peace, or else in the Issue will consume, or at least disarm him. Because if he be found so implacable, as that no Endearment, no kindness can work on him and so allay his Fury, it will be the common Concern of Mankind to look on his Inhumanity as a publick Nuisance, and to shun him as they would a Tyger or a Bear. Thus will it come to pass that his foul Stream of Rancour will at length return and flow back upon himself, while being destitute of the Assistance, the good Word and Opinion of the World round about him, he'll be so little, so inconsiderable, as that his Enmity will be yet less to be fear'd, than his Friendship to be courted. This I say of course very often happens to the Angry and Revengeful Man; besides what he may expect in a judicial way from the Hand of God, for daring to invade his Prerogative, who hath said, *To me belongeth Vengeance, I will recompence.* *Deut. 32. 35, Psal. 94. 1. Heb. 10. 30.* But withal I add, that to love our Enemies is profitable, and that not only as to our present, but also our future Interest, in the other World; which may sufficiently appear to us from this, that the pardon and Love of our Enemy now, is propos'd as an indispensable Condition of the pardon of our Sins, and of our Acceptance with God at the last day; for lest we should

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imagine that these are vain Terrors, and that God will pardon *us*, altho we do not pardon our Brethren, our Lord has plainly told us, if that *we forgive Men their Trespases, our Heavenly Father will also forgive us, but if we forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will our Father forgive our Trespases.* Mat. 6. 14. 15. Also to shew the great Importance of this Duty, and to keep it fresh in our Minds, it is inserted into our daily Prayers, in which we ask God *to forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that Trespas against us*; agreeably to which, if as often as we *pray*, we do not at once *forgive*, what a heavy Curse do we call upon our selves, and how in effect, do we desire God to be reveng'd on *us*, while we our selves are cruel and revengeful! Accordingly in our Aim we do quite miss the Mark, thinking to hit our Enemy, alas we wound our selves, whom if we had pardoned, we also might have had our Pardon seal'd, and been for ever blest'd.

2dly, I say, that the Practice of this Duty of loving Enemies is not only pleasant and profitable, but also highly Ornamental and Perfective of our Nature, as we are *Men*. Now unless we could suppose, that our Enemy is not a *Man* like our selves, it must be own'd, that in some sense, he still bears the Image of God; and at once having the same common Nature, he carries a Transcript of those Perfections which we value in our selves. Accordingly in him, tho he be indeed but a very sully'd Copy, we may and ought to pay some Respect to the Divine Original; and however he be not our *Friend*, yet is he still our *Brother*, and his Nature is to be valu'd, tho his Condition be indeed vile; and if so, why should we be cruel? Why should we *do Wrong one to another*? Why should we affront our Maker in his Image? Why should we at once disparage the Worth of our own species, and do Mischiefe to our Fellow Members of one and the same civil Body? Whereas on the other Hand, by being kind and tender-hearted to him that is our Enemy, we may advance humane Nature to the highest honour of which it is now capable. Seeing by this means, we do, as I have hinted, obtain a likeness not only to the best of Creatures, but also to the Great Creator, whose Goodness extends even to the *Sinful* and the *Unjust*. The Duty indeed may seem hard at the first, but the harder it is in the Performance, the more happy will it make us in the end. And let it also be considered, that however hard it may seem for Flesh and Blood to command down the strongest Resentments, to compress the greatest Heats, and instead of our Enemy to do Violence to our selves; yet still so much the greater is the Glory of the Atchievement; and to compleat this, God moreover assists our Infirmities by the benefits of the Christian Religion, and by his Grace bears up our Natures to this height of Perfection. Which brings me to my last Motive for practising this Duty of loving Enemies, namely, because 'tis essential to our Character as we are *Christians*.

3dly,

3dly, Now 'tis the great Drift and Design of our Holy Religion to make a spiritual Union between the Souls of Men; and therefore, says our Saviour, *Neither pray I for these, that is, the Apostles alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me thro their Word; that they all may be one as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the World may believe that thou hast sent me.* Act. 4. 32. Agreeably to which, it is said in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Multitude of them that believed were in so great Unity, that they *where of one Heart and one Soul*, Property of Goods, which commonly sets Worldly Men at great odds, did not hinder their Concord, because they *had all Things common*; by dividing their Substance, they united themselves; and because their Interest was but *one*, their minds were so too. And thus it was utterly repugnant to their Principles and Practice to harbour Malice and Hatred in their Heart; nay, so far were they from this, that they faild not to pray for their greatest Enemies, and (rather than contend about them) *they took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods*, nay, and of their very Life, *knowing in themselves that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring Substance*; and that *their light Affliction, which was but for a moment, work'd for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* Heb. 10. 34. 2. Cor. 14. 7. In this View of Life and Immortality, which they plainly beheld by the Gospel-Light, so exemplary was their Forbearance, that the Jews and Gentiles stood amaz'd, and entertained an Opinion of something more than ordinary in them: Thus did they often strike their very Enemies into Conversion, and it is observable that nothing more contributed toward the Propagation of the Christian Faith, than the Sweetness, Love and Moderation of those, who preach'd it. This Lesson they had been abundantly taught by the Precepts and Practice of Christ their Leader; and whosoever else has read the Gospel cannot but know, that this Branch of Charity and mutual Forbearance is the top Mark and distinguishing Note of a Christian. How absurd then, how inconsistent is it for Men to pretend to be Christians, and at the same time to resist this express Command of Christ, whom they own for their Lord and Master? Why do they cry unto him, *Lord, Lord*, if they do not the Things which he says? If, as they pretend, he is their Master, *where then is his Fear*? Or why do they call themselves from his Name, and profess that they abide in him, if at the same time they do not walk even as he hath walked? Who again, I say, besides his express Command, has also left us an Example, that we should follow his Steps? Who, when he was revil'd, revil'd not again, when he suffer'd, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. 1. Pet. 2. 23. He, like a Lamb, was dumb, and inoffensive to his very Executioners; they upbraid him when dying, that tho he saved others; himself he cannot save, and this rude Expression, tho not in their Sense of it, may bear a good Construction; he minds

not,

not, he thinks not of himself, but Mankind, and amidst the Horrors of his Crucifixion, when plung'd in Grief and bitterness, he opens his departing Eyes and lifts them up to Heaven, begging his Fathers Pity even upon *them* who shew none to *him*, but cruelly rob him of what they can, that is, his mortal Life; *Father, forgive them,* says he, *for they know not what they do.* Luke. 23. 34. And now at length sitting in Triumph at the right Hand of the Throne of God and governing the World, he does not take an advantage of his uncontrollable Power over us, who by our Sins are much more Enemies to God than one Man is or can be to another; but still he treats us with all the Methods of Clemency, and all the Arts of Endearments, and bears with much *long-suffering those Vessels of Wrath*, which obstinately fit themselves for Destruction. And now, *if God so loved us, surely we ought also to love one another*, to love after all, I hope I need not say, those who love and do us Good, but even those who hate and do us Hurt. To hate our Friend or innocent Persons, is to reverse the first Principle of our Being, and to put the Foundations of our Nature out of course; and therefore would it look most base and unworthy even in the Judgment of Heathens. Also to hate even those who hate us, is, as we have seen, repugnant to the Principles of Christians; for as much as they ought to advance the Spirit of Love to the utmost Perfection, and no such Roots as Rancour and Malice must be suffer'd to grow in their Breasts. And to indulge these Inclinations, is to remove our selves at the greatest distance from those serene and blessed Regions, where perfect Love and Friendship reign, where Peace and good Will, Benignity and Kindness do mutually flow, and will for ever bless the *Saints in Light*.

Wherefore lastly, my Brethren, as we value the Enjoyment of Heaven and Happiness, it highly concerns us in this Respect, to examine our Hearts, and to consider how far we have hitherto, and how we may hereafter conform our Lives to this Doctrine, so as to make it appear before Men, that we are not *unprofitable Speakers* or *Hearers* only, but also *Doers of the Word* now delivered, For my own part, who have for some time preach'd and pray'd among you, I call God to record, that according to my Knowledge and Ability, I have endeavour'd to *live in all good Conscience before him* *untill this Day*; Acts. 23. 1. and particularly in the Respect now mentioned, *I am pure from the Blood of all Men*, Act. 20. 26. that is, I am not guilty of their Ruine (if they perish) either by my Doctrine or my Example: This I do not say, out of Pride or Vain-glory, but least the *Appearance* of some *Evil*, I mean of some past or future Malignity on my side should arise from the Circumstance I am now under: In that, my Dear Friends, unless my standing in this Place, might be made less precarious, and I might dare to do *Good* without *Fear* of undermining it, I think it neither for my Interest, my Honour, nor my Ease to hold it any longer, and therefore now declare



declare my Inclination to leave it. Not but I do this with the utmost Reluctancy in reference to *you*; *you*, for whom I would gladly spend whatever I have or am, and whom I have done and shall for ever look on as *my Foy* and *my Crown*, that considering the very disadvantageous way of my first coming in, and settling amongst you, have, beyond all my Hope or Expectation, open'd your Hearts and Hands, and generously shewn your Bounty towards me; *you*, that from the Highest and Wealthiest to the Lowest and poorest, have exemplify'd to me on one Hand a more obliging Condescension, and on the other, a more humble Respect, than perhaps I have ever seen paid, or could think due to a Person of my Character and Station; *you*, in a Word, whose Goodness, I may say, has forestall'd my Desires, and for the most part been opener in giving, than my Hands have been in receiving; and who, I'm perswaded, have never entertain'd any ill Will toward me, unless thro *evil Instigation*, *Misunderstanding*, *Misrepresentation* or *Slander*; from which the purest Innocence cannot secure to it self a Protection. Yet however, 'tis thought expedient (I need not mention by whom nor for what) and, to avoid perpetual Contentions, Jealousies and Broils, I my self, since *Thursday* last have thought so too, that I should *immediately* quit this little but beloved post, which I have for some years unworthily maintain'd; unworthily I say, tho not thro Design but Infirmary, I having sincerely intended your Good and my Conscience bearing Witness, that as well by my private Studies (which have for some time past been harder than ordinary) as by my publick appearances among you, I have heartily endeavour'd the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls. Agreeably to my Ordination-Promise, this has ever been my chief end in view, and for this, I now solemnly declare, that, if providentially call'd to do it, I would readily devote my self a Sacrifice. Accordingly in this respect my *Intention* has been pure, so that I can say from my Heart, that I have never directly *coveted any Man's Silver or Gold*, or whatever else might come in competition with the Glory of God, and which worldly Men are so much busy'd in carking and contending for; but I have contentedly taken things as they have come into my Hands, without giving Trouble to others or my self. Nay, to let it appear, that not worldly Interest, but *sincere* and *undisfil'd Religion* was uppermost in me, the God, by whose Blessing I now breath and speak, and who can justly punish me, if I say what is false, knows me to have often thought with my self, that if it might be offer'd at without Offence, I would chuse even in this wealthy Place (as little as my own Substance is) to discharge the Ministerial Office, abstractedly from worldly Gain, and expecting no Recompence till the last Day. This, I say, is known to the Searcher of all Hearts, in whose Fear I now act and speak, and whom I acknowledge in all my ways; whom I readily follow wheresoever he calls; and so allowing

somewhat

somewhat for humane Infirmities, I am never much Troubled at any Changes or seeming Chances of this mortal Life, as being perswaded that they are by his Appointment, who knows and does what is best for the Faithful and never fails them, who diligently seek him; who tho indeed he may seem for a while to hide his Face, yet either breaks out by agreeable Intervals, as the Sun out of Clouds; or at least in the winding up of the whole Drama makes all things work together for Good to them that love him. This he most commonly does in this Life, or in the next will surely do at the Resurrection of the Just, when he will examine the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, when he will make abundant Amends for all the Inequalities of things here below, and so make it finally appear, that he has judged the World in Righteousness and the People with Equity.

O what a blessed Day will this be to good Men, when there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain: But God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes! Rev. 12. 4. When the Harbingers of their Saviours Coming; the Angels sounding the Trump of God, the turning of the Sun into Darkness and of the Moon into Blood, the melting of the Elements with fervent Heat, and the whole visible World set on Fire will not deject but make them lift up their Heads with Hope, because their Redemption draws nigh. Of which number that we may all be, and stand with Boldness before the Son of Man, let us, among others, be sure to practise the Doctrine of the Text, and so to forgive Men their Trespases as we expect God to forgive us ours, and to fulfil the Promise made to the Charitable, that they shall enter into Life eternal. Mat. 25. ult. Thus we shall make it appear that we do, when if being revild, we revile not again; we suffer, we threaten not, but patiently commit our selves to him that judgeth righteously; that is, to God, to whom Vengeance belongs, and who will certainly repay it. Not that this Obligation, for Instance, will bar a Man's clearing himself from Aspersions, by declaring and opening the Truths that concern him; nay this a Person, especially of a publick Character or who bears a Sacred Office, is bound to do, and this, that he may the better answer the End, he is design'd for, by doing Good. Which was the very Case of St. Paul himself, who would rather have chosen to die, than that any Man should make his Glorifying void; 1. Cor. 9. 15. and when having assumed the Imputation of Folly, for seemingly Boasting and Speaking well of himself, he adds this further Apology for it, saying to his Adversaries, Ye have compell'd me. 2. Cor. 12. 11. ye have in a manner forc'd me to it, even in my own Defence; forasmuch as instead of being blam'd, I ought to have been commended of you. May you, my dear Friends, neither slander nor give any Occasion to do this, that is, may you Neither slander any, nor have need to clear your selves from Slander! May an unfeign'd and universal Love constantly reign in your and my Hearts; and

and thus may we imitate God who is Love, and Christ Jesus, who loved us better than his Life! Thus may we comfort our selves with Angels and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, by propagating Peace and good Will here on Earth! In a Word, may we ever live in mutual Embraces and thereby make our Passage easy in this Vale of Tears till at length we arrive at the very Element of Joy and Love, and happily meet in the Kingdom of Heaven!

Which God grant, we may all do in his due Time thro the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be ascrib'd all Glory, Adoration and Obedience both now and ever more. *Amen.*

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